

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, August 21, 1878, with transcript

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL TO MABEL (Hubbard) BELL Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin.
Wed. August 21st, 1878. You poor darling:

Please don't be so distressed about that article in the Times. I am beginning to be quite troubled too — just because you are — although I haven't the remotest idea what it is all about!

You forgot to mention the date of the paper — and I have looked and looked in vain over all the copies of the Times in this hotel.

After all what does it matter? Let the Times say what it pleases. Truth and Justice will triumph in the end. I don't want to appear before the public as Mr. Edison is doing just now in his contest with Mr. Hughes. I don't want to figure in any personal disputes about priority of invention. Let others vindicate my claims if they choose but keep me out of the strife.

All questions of priority will soon be settled by the Patent office in Washington and the publication of the facts elicited in the course of the examination will be worth whole volumes of letters to the Times. Help me to be patient there's a darling — Help me “to labour and to wait.” If you can only keep me at work — I am sure that patient work and continual advance will do more to convince the public of the justice of my claims than all the letters that could be written to the papers upon the subject. Do you know I almost worship Longfellow for his “Psalm of Life.” It is so beautiful — it is so comforting — it is so inspiring — it is so true . Make me work there's a good little girl — at anything — it doesn't matter what — only make me work — so that I may be accomplishing something.

Library of Congress

Please don't use your influence over me to arouse my angry passions and to urge me on to a violent course. Let me be at peace with the world even if it won't be at peace with me.

2

It will all come right in the end I am sure it will. If the papers choose to abuse me now I can't help it and so long as they abuse me unjustly — I don't care! for the reaction must come. I feel towards the public as I did towards you when you hated me. The worse you treated me the more sorry would you be for it afterwards! I won't even look at that article in the Times unless you want me to. Why should I go and worry and excite myself over what I can't help — especially when that worry must incapacitate me for profitable work. The excitement of the association — the Deaf and Dumb Institution and the Industrial School — have aroused in my mindstrains of thought — that may produce good fruit — if I can only be persuaded to work earnestly and patiently — so let the press quarrel over the inventor of the Telephone if it pleases. Why should it matter to the world who invented the telephone so long as the world gets the benefit of it? Why should it matter to me what the world says upon the subject so long as I have obtained the object for which I laboured and have got you my sweet sweet darling wife? And why should it matter so very much to you and to my little Elsie so long as the pecuniary benefits of the invention are not taken from us — and as long as you are conscious of my uprightness and integrity? Help me dear to keep quiet, and turn my thoughts into more profitable channels than those of angry feelings and violent actions — and give me your love my darling and your sympathy — for I can assure you that I sadly need them both.

Your loving Husband, Alec. Mrs. A. G. Bell, 25 Aubyn Road, Upper Norwood.